

## *Editorial Department.*

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### THE CURABILITY OF INSANITY.

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IN his last two or three annual reports of the Northampton Asylum, Dr. Pliny Earle has devoted more or less space to the curability of insanity, analyzing and comparing the statistics of American Hospitals for the insane, deducing from these analyses the conclusion that the number of recoveries reported far exceeds the number of persons recovered, and hence that permanent recovery, free from the liability to relapse, may from these statistics be almost considered the exception rather than the rule.

In the current number of the *Alienist and Neurologist*, the new psychiatric journal published in St. Louis by Dr. Hughes, which has just come to hand, there are two papers by Dr. Earle. In the first of these a table which has adorned asylum reports and furnished a basis for arguments in favor of the present style of asylum treatment, is mercilessly analyzed. The wonder is that this was never done before, and that its illogical assumptions, pointed out by Dr. Earle, have ever carried any weight.

He traces up the subsequent history of its twenty-five selected cases of insanity subjected to early treatment and discharged as recovered, and finds that nine of these have died insane, one other died sane after repeated attacks, two died only a short time after their discharge. Two others died long enough after discharge to justify the judgment that their recovery was definite. Of the eleven still living, only three can be called altogether of sound mind, and one of these has been insane since his discharge. This is certainly a sufficiently bad showing for asylums as hospitals for the cure of mental disease. But in his second paper, which is written in reply to some strictures by Dr. Isaac Ray, Dr. Earle takes up more

of lunacy reform, the views of the American Association of Superintendents will be in the main upheld in this new periodical. While we shall probably find abundant occasion to differ with Dr. Hughes on questions that may arise, we must, nevertheless, take this opportunity to congratulate him on the evident merit and good appearance of his journal.

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WE have also received the first number of the *Archives of Comparative Medicine and Surgery*, edited by our esteemed contributor, Dr. E. C. Spitzka. It is a quarterly journal of scientific veterinary medicine, but of a class and character that raises it above being the mere organ of the practitioners on the lower animals, and places it well up among the scientific periodicals of the country. It will be none the less, but the more useful to veterinary practitioners from this fact. Dr. Spitzka is well qualified for the task he has assigned himself, and we wish his enterprise its deserved success.

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